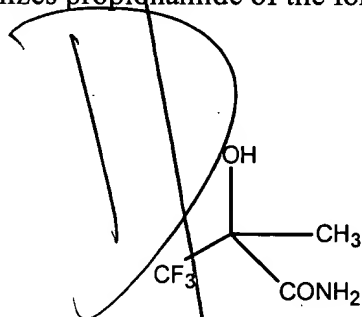


C1
cont

23. (Amended) The microorganism of claim 22 wherein said microorganism is selected from the group consisting of the genus *Rhodococcus*, *Arthrobacter*, *Bacillus*, *Klebsiella* and *Pseudomonas*.

24. (Amended) The microorganism of claim 23 wherein said microorganism is selected from the group consisting of the species *Klebsiella oxytoca* PRS1 (DSM 11009), *Klebsiella oxytoca* PRS1K17 (DSM 11623), *Rhodococcus opacus* ID-662 (DSM 11344), *Arthrobacter ramosus* ID-620 (DSM 11350), *Bacillus* sp. ID-621 (DSM 11351), *Klebsiella planticola* ID-624 (DSM 11354), *Klebsiella pneumoniae* ID-625 (DSM 11355) and *Pseudomonas* sp. (DSM 11010).

25. (Amended) A cell extract derived from a biologically pure culture of a microorganism wherein said microorganism utilizes propionamide of the formula:



VI

in the form of the racemate or of its optically active isomers as the sole nitrogen source; and

wherein said microorganism hydrolyzes said propionamide.

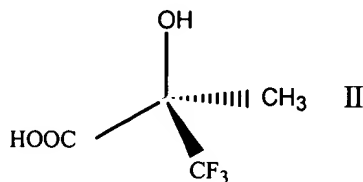
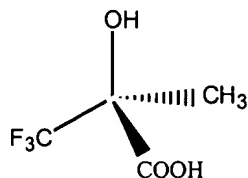
C1
Cont

26. (Amended) The cell extract of claim 25 wherein said microorganism is selected from the group consisting of the genus *Rhodococcus*, *Arthrobacter*, *Bacillus*, *Klebsiella* and *Pseudomonas*.

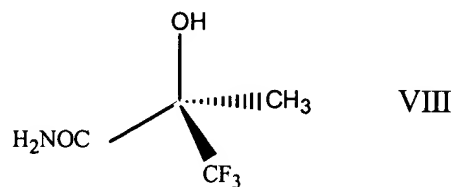
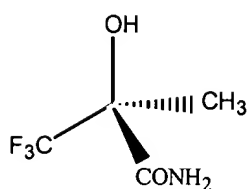
27. (Amended) The cell extract of claim 26 wherein said microorganism is selected from the group consisting of the species *Klebsiella oxytoca* PRS1 (DSM 11009), *Klebsiella oxytoca* PRS1K17 (DSM 11623), *Rhodococcus opacus* ID-662 (DSM 11344), *Arthrobacter ramosus* ID-620 (DSM 11350), *Bacillus* sp. ID-621 (DSM 11351), *Klebsiella planticola* ID-624 (DSM 11354), *Klebsiella pneumoniae* ID-625 (DSM 11355) and *Pseudomonas* sp. (DSM 11010).

Sub D3

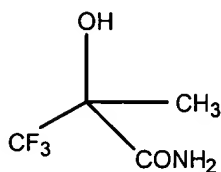
28. (Amended) A process for the preparation of (S) - or (R) -3, 3, 3-trifluoro-2-hydroxy-2-methylpropionic acid of the formula:



or of (R) - or (S) -3, 3, 3-trifluoro-2-hydroxy-2-methylpropionamide of the formula



comprising converting propionamide of the formula

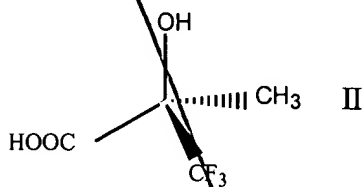


into a compound of the formula I, II, VII or VIII using:

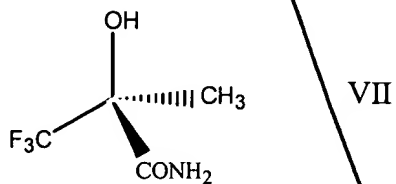
- (a) the microorganism of claim 22, 23, 24, 41 or 42; or
- (b) the cell extract of claim 25, 26, 27, 43 or 44.

29. (Amended) The process of claim 28 further comprising the step of isolating a compound of the formula I, II, VII or VIII.

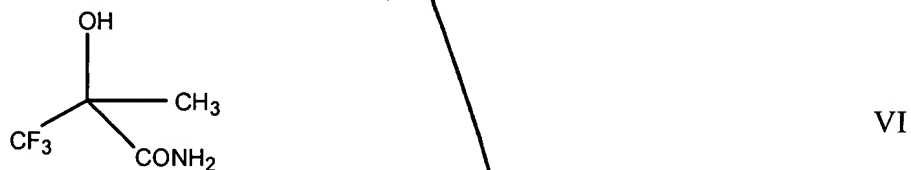
30. (Amended) A process for the preparation of (R) -3, 3, 3-trifluoro-2-hydroxy-2-methylpropionic acid of the formula



or of (S) -3, 3, 3-trifluoro-2-hydroxy-2-methyl-propionamide of the formula



comprising converting propionamide of the formula

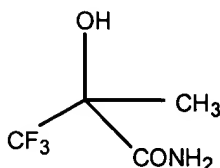


into the compound of the formula II utilizing the microorganism of claim 22, 23, 24, 41 or 42.

C1
CONT.

31. (Amended) The process of claim 30 further comprising the step of isolating the compound of formula II or formula VII.

32. (Amended) The process of claim 30 wherein said microorganism contains a nucleic acid molecule encoding a polypeptide having aminohydrolase activity wherein said polypeptide hydrolyzes (R) -3, 3, 3-trifluoro-2-hydroxy-2-methylpropionamide of the formula:



VI

33. (Amended) The process of claim 32 wherein said nucleic acid molecule encodes the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.

34. (Amended) The process of claim 32 wherein said nucleic acid molecule is selected from the group consisting of:

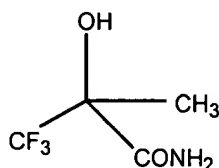
- (a) a nucleic acid molecule comprising the sequence of SEQ ID NO:1;
- (b) a nucleic acid molecule comprising the sequence complementary to SEQ ID NO:1; and

Cl
cont

(c) a nucleic acid molecule which hybridizes under stringent hybridization conditions to SEQ ID NO:1; wherein said nucleic acid molecule encodes a polypeptide with stereospecific amidohydrolase activity.

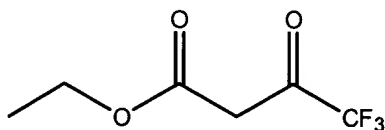
35. (Amended) The process of claim 30 wherein said microorganism is of the genus *Klebsiella*.

36. (Amended) The process of claim 28 or 30 characterized in that the propionamide of the formula



VI

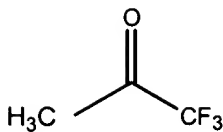
is prepared by converting, in a first step, trifluoroacetate of the formula



III

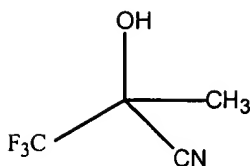
into trifluoroacetone of the formula

C/
CONT-



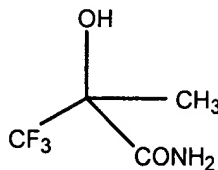
IV

using a mineral acid, converting the former, in the second step, into the propionitrile of the formula



V

using a cyanide, and converting the former, in the third step, into the propionamide of the formula



VI

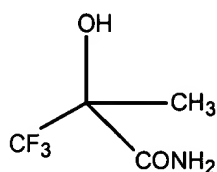
(a) chemically using concentrated mineral acid; or (b) biologically using microorganisms of the genus *Rhodococcus*.

37. (Amended) The process of claim 36 wherein said mineral acid is selected from the group consisting of: sulphuric acid, phosphoric acid and nitric acid.

C/
cont. cyanide.

38. (Amended) The process of claim 36 wherein said cyanide is an alkali metal

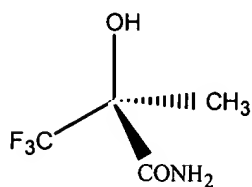
39. (Amended) The process of claims 28, 30, or 36 characterized in that the conversion of the propionamide of the formula



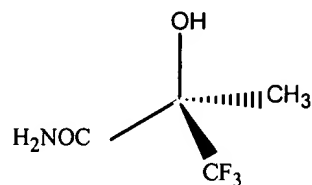
VI

is carried out using microorganisms of the genus selected from the group consisting of *Klebsiella*, *Rhodococcus*, *Arthrobacter*, *Bacillus*, *Escherichia*, *Comamonas*, *Acinetobacter*, *Rhizobium*, *Agrobacterium*, *Rhizobium/Agrobacterium* and *Pseudomonas*.

40. (Amended) The process of claims 28 or 30, characterized in that the (S) - or (R) -3, 3, 3-trifluoro-2-hydroxy-2-methylpropionamide of the formula



VII



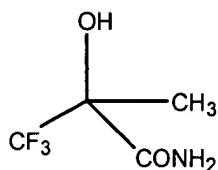
VIII

C/Cont. is hydrolysed to the compound of the formula I or II (a) chemically in the presence of a base or
(b) biologically using microorganisms of the genus *Rhodococcus*.

Please add new claims 41-44 as follows:

41. (New) A biologically pure culture of a microorganism

C2 wherein said microorganism utilizes propionamide of the formula:

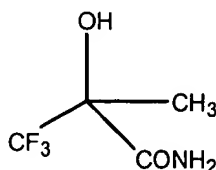


VI

in the form of the racemate or of its optically active isomers as the sole nitrogen source; and
wherein said microorganism is selected from the group consisting of the genus *Rhodococcus*,
Arthrobacter, *Bacillus*, *Klebsiella* and *Pseudomonas*.

42. (New) A biologically pure culture of a microorganism

wherein said microorganism utilizes propionamide of the formula:

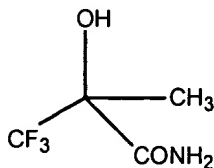


VI

in the form of the racemate or of its optically active isomers as the sole nitrogen source; and wherein said microorganism is selected from the group consisting of the species *Klebsiella oxytoca* PRS1 (DSM 11009), *Klebsiella oxytoca* PRS1K17 (DSM 11623), *Rhodococcus opacus* ID-662 (DSM 11344), *Arthrobacter ramosus* ID-620 (DSM 11350), *Bacillus* sp. ID-621 (DSM 11351), *Klebsiella planticola* ID-624 (DSM 11354), *Klebsiella pneumoniae* ID-625 (DSM 11355) and *Pseudomonas* sp. (DSM 11010).

43. (New) A cell extract derived from a biologically pure culture of a

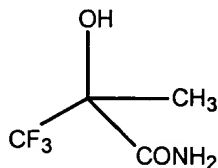
microorganism wherein said microorganism utilizes propionamide of the formula:



VI

C2
cont.
in the form of the racemate or of its optically active isomers as the sole nitrogen source; and
wherein said microorganism is selected from the group consisting of the genus *Rhodococcus*,
Arthrobacter, *Bacillus*, *Klebsiella* and *Pseudomonas*.

44. (New) A cell extract derived from a biologically pure culture of a
microorganism wherein said microorganism utilizes propionamide of the formula:



VI

in the form of the racemate or of its optically active isomers as the sole nitrogen source; and
wherein said microorganism is selected from the group consisting of the species *Klebsiella*
oxytoca PRS1 (DSM 11009), *Klebsiella oxytoca PRS1K17* (DSM 11623), *Rhodococcus opacus*
ID-662 (DSM 11344), *Arthrobacter ramosus ID-620* (DSM 11350), *Bacillus sp. ID-621* (DSM
11351), *Klebsiella planticola ID-624* (DSM 11354), *Klebsiella pneumoniae ID-625* (DSM
11355) and *Pseudomonas sp.* (DSM 11010).
